

5-23-1875

Letter from Anne Whitney, Florence, Italy, to Adeline Manning, 1875 May 23

Anne Whitney

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Florence May 28/75-

Adeline my dear Aunt - on
this beautiful Sunday morning
of May 28. 1875 - I cd. wish
you were in Florence, if it wd
profit & bring you here. You were
you here - in the midst of this balmy
air - then says - this "mist of bells"
you wd be at once dispossessed
of all fears as to the well-being
of your friend - But - when we
come here together & stay awhile
I shall not choose this house
for various reasons - 1st -
the walls the trees & the houses
do much shut it in & there is no
looking over or out into blessed space -
2^d - every room in this Court ^{is} as
alive & ~~delirious~~ ^{delirious} ~~fiery~~ ^{fiery} - 3^d - There
is a private stable underneath - wh.
the better than a public is still a
stable - No - we will go to the Piazza
Azeglia - when you look out into a
green & beautiful piazza & over that
to the mts. But O - Florence -
Florence how beautiful thou art!
Adeline we never saw together &
fraction of it - Ah - if you were
here we wd go this sunset to the

Christus of Santa Marie Novella.
But in the way of instruction there
is nothing here for you - Mr.
Swann says emphatically there
is nothing - There is a life-school
for men - & I see by the Guide -
there is a young ladies drawing school
kept by Miss - Mr. Dr. has
ideas upon the subject of art-teaching
that so nearly correspond with my
own that I fear you wd not be edified
by them - He says Ladies come to him
& beg them to teach them this or that -
& only want you to tell me says one
how to paint water & skies - The only
way to do it is to study them he says -
Art cannot be taught - Also - he
says - In Paris all the artists are
willing to take pupils - Here none -
So that if help (& this I certainly
believe) is to be got from masters
you are on the spot.

As regards myself
I think I shall be with you shortly -
I have greatly improved my model -
The Mr. B. is not so that it needs
anything done to it - he acknowledges it
is better - I shall work on on two more
mornings on it - then it will be ready
for the workmen & the marble. The
marble will come no earlier by my
waiting. The men will have all their
instruments by I leave. The marble
will not wait me until the finishing
which will stay to be engraving to Eugene
& Caldo - Allons - I will see the

salon - & cut out my cloths
for next winter. I will go
into the Country & see Babcock
& the other game cocks - I will give
ideas & you shall furnish the
designs. Think what an exalted
role is yours. 'No objects marble
not secured there is no stone left -
returned to find a stone - There
is one chance in the present - There
is a large block of Carrara at
Livorno wh. the proposition will
not cut (7000 lbs) Rogers is coming
from Rome to find a lump & Eyre
thinks he & I may combine. He
takes 4/5 - & I. 1/5 - Outside of
this - there are improved roads
leading from the Mountain heart -
& Italian promises - That I
shd. have fallen upon such evil
days!

When I am there - where shall
I be? This is a question that may
well give me pause. Shall we dine
on pottage & look at the Vestal &
& sleep with our heads out of the
windows & listen of assassination at
our doors? Where shall I go when
I come? answer me that -
I think I shall be fully prepared
to leave this. The 1st of June. If

we can live cheaply in Paris this
Summer it will be well. we shall
have the money to spend in the country
your Aunt & Cousins were delighted
with downland - They left here
last Thurs. for Venice - thence to
believe for Suisse - afterwards for
Paris -

I am very gay - I went yesterday
P.M. to a reception at B's Studio
& in the Evg. to Mrs. Megrim's - other
will dissipated have diversified
the evgs. & afternoons. Such as
tea drinking at wh. Debauches &
moderately imbibing hot water & so try
to make a reputation for my Country
of moderation - & theatrical enter-
tainments - Such good actors as
they are in this Country! It needs
such a substratum of necessities
& general intelligence in this art
for the first two living Gre-
gories of the world to have sprung
out of. We sit in the Summer
theatre - under the open heavens
on a ground of pebbles or pine rush-
bottomed chairs - we of the quality
I mean who pay a franc apiece -
The plebs sit on stone benches
in the amphitheatre behind - taken as
the ancient Romans did - the blood-
thirsty ones - when they called for their
kind of blood with the inverted thumbs